

For the record, my name is James B. Carpita, Beaverhead County Engineer, Dillon, MT.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee.

As you may be aware, Beaverhead County has withdrawn Its application from this cycle of TSEP grants. However, this does not mean that TSEP funding for bridge replacement / repairs is any less important to counties like Beaverhead. We have over 150 bridges on our 1500 miles of county maintained roads. The average age of the bridges in our system is 60 years old. This means that for the most part our bridges are functionally / structurally beyond their reasonable anticipated life.

In addition to TSEP funding, Beaverhead County has used Title II & III funds including US Forest service RAC & Firewise funds as well as our levied / non-levied county funds to replace 12 bridges in the past 4 years or just 8% of our aged structures. With the anticipated reduction / out right elimination of these Federal funding sources, the TSEP program becomes even more important to Beaverhead County with a population of approximately 10,000 people and where a mill generates less than \$19,000.

Therefore, we strongly urge this body to support the passage of HB11. And in fact to invest additional funds in the TSEP program to assure the county bridges throughout Montana remain safe and adequate to handle the economic recovery that we are all focused on.

In closing, I would like to thank the Department of Commerce's TSEP staff for all their assistance and dedication to making the program a viable part of Montana's infrastructure funding and to thank this committee for their time as well.

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